

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

OPPOSITE VIEWS OF HOME RULE.

LETTERS ON UNIONIST DELUSIONS. By A. V. DICEY. 16mo. 100 pp. London: Macmillan & Co.

IRELAND'S CAUSE IN ENGLAND'S PARLIAMENT. By JESSE MCCARTHY, M. P., with Prefaces by JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY. 16mo. pp. 132. Boston: Ticknor & Co.

The literature of the Irish question, while steadily increasing in bulk, is improving in quality, temper and workmanship. These two volumes present in compact form and in a scholarly as well as logical manner the argument against and in favor of legislative autonomy; and it is by no means an easy matter to decide which is the more incisive or the better-tempered statement of the case. The Irish question has become wearisome to newspaper readers, who, since Mr. Parnell entered upon his Parliamentary career, have been swiftest with details of legislation debate and agitation. Probably there are hundreds of men of letters and thousands of men of the world who would consider it a happy release from tedious controversy if they could be spared for the remainder of their days the necessity of writing or reading anything more about this interminable conflict. Still, as Mr. Gladstone has said, the Irish question "has the field." It is the core of English politics today, as it has been for a decade; and unless it be carefully studied what is of supreme importance in the public life of the United Kingdom will be neglected. These two volumes are all that anybody needs to read in order to gain an adequate idea of the present state of the Irish question--of the best plea which fair-minded Irishmen can make for a separate Parliament and of the strongest objections which an equally fair-minded Englishman can urge against Home Rule.

Professor Dicey's volume is made up of letters contributed to "The Spectator" for the purpose of strengthening the Unionist cause after the elections of 1886. In a previous volume, entitled "England's Case Against Home Rule," of which thousands of copies were circulated during the electoral canvass, he rendered much assistance to Mr. Gladstone's opponents. In these letters he has endeavored to prevent detections from the Unionist column by sharply defining the real issues which were decided in 1886. In this spirit he condemns every effort for bringing into closer relations the warring sections of the Liberal party. He demonstrates that the concessions which Mr. Gladstone has been importunate to make in order to reunite that party would be ruinous to his scheme of Home Rule. That scheme had two chief merits, in Mr. Dicey's judgment: there was an attempt in the Land Purchase bill to save English honor and to deal justly with landholders; and the removal of the Irish members from Westminster was an earnest of the reinvigoration of the British Parliament. If Land Purchase be discarded and the Irish representatives retained in Westminster, the policy of Home Rule is not made better, but infinitely worse, by concessions which entail dishonor on the Nation and arm the Parnellites with power to govern England as well as Ireland. Mr. Dicey's argument points to Mr. Gladstone's scheme as the best possible form of the worst possible policy for England. He holds that concessions and compromises will simply deprive it of its merits and convert it into the worst possible form of the worst possible policy.

With equal candor and cogency the author argues that the refusal to Ireland of a separate Parliament is the outward and visible sign of the unity of the Kingdom, whereas the creation of an Irish Parliament, endowed with even the most limited powers, would be an open acknowledgment that the Irish Nationalists had carried their point. In like manner he contends that federalism is more dangerous to England than Irish independence; that Home Rule in this guise of federalism means not the close of a conflict, but the opening of a revolution; that any scheme of local self-government will not only fail to satisfy Ireland, but will wake the Government in its contest with lawlessness; and that, in short, there is no substitute for Mr. Gladstone's scheme which will not be rejected by the Irish people and enormously increase the difficulties of Crown government in Ireland. Compromise, in a word, is worse than surrender, and consequently the loyal Unionist must fight with the Tories to the bitter end against Home Rule.

Mr. McCarthy's work, while less controversial, is equally free from cant and sophistry. He presents the facts of the case with naked edge precisely as they are. He shows how Home Rule does not involve necessarily the dissolution of the United Kingdom, since the countries were indissolubly joined together when there were two Parliaments; and, consequently, that there is nothing revolutionary nor even novel in the demand for the restoration of the Irish legislature. He explains how Ireland lost her Parliament through no fault nor crime nor treason of her own; how the Act of Union was forced upon her by infamous means without her consent; how her people have never ceased to demand the restoration of their ancient rights; and how her present representatives in Westminster have followed the noblest traditions of her patriotic history. He contends that Irish Catholics are willing to give every statutable security for the protection of the Protestant minority that the wit of man can devise, and proudly affirms that the Island is now practising the great art of self-government and training itself in every way for the duties and privileges of national life. Fortunately is the most unfortunate of islands in having so eloquent and so tranquil a historian as Mr. McCarthy to plead its cause. While Mr. Dicey views with consternation and despair the prospect of a separate Parliament, the Irish leader calmly looks back upon the vistas of history before and since the Union, and knows no fear.

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